of the line of street, that, in roads where the different rows of houses do not form one line, each row of houses should be considered the line of street: no encroachment on buildings of any description ought to be suffered in the fore-courts or garden-fronts abutting upon a public way.

Your committe further state, that, in consequence of the proposed alteration in taking the rate of the houses, namely, by the height of the external walls instead of the superficial measure, they think it but proper that in some cases the party and external walls be increased in thickness *under the new act*.

Your committee, however, cannot agree to recommend the several clauses which prohibit more than four floors, unless the walls are of a first-rate building. These clauses will prevent square attics in second and third and fourth-rate houses: for, under the proposed act, the floors are to be counted from the lowest or basement floor; under the old act, they were counted and all heights taken from the ground floor; it is true that an additional floor may be added by a kirb roof, the fore front not being above the prescribed height; but your committee submit that this mode of obtaining an additional floor is an evasion of, instead of a compliance with, the spirit of the act; and further, that this mode of construction by kirb roofs is not the soundest way in finishing the upper construction of any building, and ought not to be encouraged by the legislature.

Your committee would wish most particularly to call your attention to the increased thickness proposed in the withs and backs and fronts of flues, and recommend your determined opposition to this proposition, especially as regards the backs and fronts of flues; it will add most considerably to the expenses, and cause unsightly projections into the several rooms, and also prevent, as at present, the flues being carried up in a two-brick party wall. Your committee have no hesitation in declaring this proposed addition as useless and uncalled for; the objection to the present thickness of the withs and the backs and front of flues might be met by a clause prohibiting any but hard sound stocks in the internal construction of such flues, worked smooth in the interior; and without pargeting, the whole or nearly the whole of a party wall to a third and fourth-rate house would, under this arrangement, have to be, from the foundation to the roof, no less than three bricks thick; and where the chimneys have to be built back to back, the whole thickness will not be less than five bricks thick, and will in some cases be even more than that.

Your committee further submit that, as under the old act, so in the intended act, the usual recess or indent in party walls, for the pipes from internal upper water-closets, is not provided for; they have therefore recommended that provision should be made for this now universally called for accommodation.

Your committee particularly call the attention of the society to the clauses in the new bill, as to the construction and timbering of the several buildings to be built upon the commencement of the intended act; and to point out to the society the impossibility of conforming in many instances to the schedule referred to: and further, that the limitation as to bearings and the consequent introduction of girders in every ceiling more than 15 feet square, will add most considerably to the expense of timbering, and at the same time, in almost every instance, very materially diminish the strength of the horizontal bearing of the floor above.

Your committee further, and in connection with the preceding remark, beg to call your attention to the proposal to prohibit (almost all) timbers from being placed in party walls, and compelling trimmers, and trimming joists, girders, &c., to be placed upon shoes or corbels, a mode of construction objectionable in so many ways, that it is hoped that the promoters of the bill will at once withdraw the proposal.

Your committee particularly call the attention of the society to the enormous increase of the fees that will be chargeable upon every description of building; fees are not only more than doubled to the district surveyor, but it is proposed to appoint official referees in case of any difference between the builder and district surveyor, and in many other matters. These fees, already quite large enough, and quite satisfactory to the present district surveyors, will be so increased and so oppressive, that your committee recommend your most determined opposition to the proposed scale. To increase these fees according to the present scale, will go a great way to defeat the benefit likely to accrue to the public by the recent reduction in the timber duties.

Your committee do not object to the appointment of official referees, but that efficient persons may be appointed to that office, they recommend the erasure of the word ARCHITECT, being assured that there are many parties not being what is termed an architect who would be much better qualified to carry out the details of a Building Act, but at the same time, leaving it with the Home Secretary as to who shall be appointed. They also think, that if the official referees were paid by a salary, instead of by fees, it would be of much improvement, as preventing unnecessary references, at the same time the parties litigant paying certain fees, which might go in aid of the salaries.

Your committee having endeavoured thus generally to bring the most material points in the bill under your notice, have pleasure in reporting, that in many respects the proposed bill is a great improvement upon the old Building Act, and have only to regret, that in the drawing up Government did not avail themselves of PRACTICAL experience; they have only further to add, that they have annexed their observations in detail on the intended bill, and to which they beg to call the serious attention of the society.

Signed by direction of the committee,
17 May, 1843. H. BIERS, President.

To ascertain the Rate of Building.—Page 4, section 6, line 23. To prevent a difference of opinion between the district surveyor and the builder as to which front is to be taken for the heights, it is recommended that the fore front or principal front of the building be the one to be taken.

Page 4, sec. 6, line 24. The words "OR FIRST" ought to be taken out, as also the words "ANY ONE," and the words "the principal front" added, taking out the letter "s" in the word fronts.

Second-rate Building.—Page 4, sec. 8, line 33. The word "NOT" ought to be taken out, or second-rate houses will be prohibited from having more than four square stories, unless by that objectionable arrangement a kirb roof or a room in the roof.

Official Referees.—Page 7, sec. 15, lines 2, 3. The words "being architect" ought to be taken out of this clause, leaving it to the Home Secretary to appoint any person having knowledge required; and here your committee would suggest the propriety of a selection from persons of PRACTICAL experience.

Attached or Additional Buildings.—Page 7, sec. 16, line 20. The word "external" to be taken out.

Lines 22 and 25. Also, from the word "*but*" to the word "*completed*," leaving the WHOLE of the walls to additional buildings of the thickness according to the rate of such buildings.

Method of ascertaining the Rate.—Page 7, sec. 18, lines 40, 41. For ascertaining the heights for the purpose of determining the rate of the building, the principal or fore front ought to be taken; it is therefore proposed to expunge the word "highest" and insert instead the word "principal," taking out the words "*or side*," "*not being a party wall*," as the side walls of a detached house will sometimes gable ten feet above the front.

Penalties.—Page 9, sec. 23, lines 24, 30, 31, 32. In this section the word "surveyor" is cut out, and the words "the poor of the parish" inserted instead, as it appears to your committee that the surveyor ought not to be benefited by his own negligence; this section will also be improved by the words "unless and to the end" being taken out.

Windows in Basement Story.—Page 9, sec. 24, line 37. The words "nine inches" ought to be taken out, if not, the window-backs in kitchens will be very low, if a thick lintel and a strong wall-plate are used over the window.

Heights of Rooms.—Page 10, sec. 25, line 3. The height of the basement story might with propriety be altered from eight feet to seven feet six inches, giving an opportunity of draining with a better current where the out-drainage will not permit quicker fall, and especially where buildings have front shops, more than one step to a shop entrance being objectionable.

Eighth Rate or Public Buildings to be re-surveyed after completion.—Page 10, sec. 28, lines 37, 38. To prevent ambiguity, and consequently difference of opinion between surveyor and builder, the word "SUCH" ought to be taken out, and the words "EIGHTH RATE" inserted. "TWENTY-ONE" days' notice to survey is much too long a notice; "SEVEN" has been substituted by your committee.

Iron Doors in Party Walls to Warehouses, &c.—Page 12, sec. 32, lines 13, 15, 22. In this section the words from "and" to the word "wall" have been taken out, it being quite unnecessary to have so large a space between two iron doors as FOUR FEET; and the word "four" has been altered to the word "one," and it appears that limiting warehouses and workshops to thirty-five square feet may operate injuriously.

Cesspools in Streets and Alleys.—Page 14, sec. 38, lines 29, 30. The words from "and," with the whole of the thirtieth line, are taken out, as it appears to be useless to give the overseers the trouble of superintending a Building Act, when there are to be paid officers for such superintendence; this will apply to all the clauses of "Bill where &c."

Drains as to Superficial Measure.—Page 15, sec. 41, line 11. This section as it stands will do away with nine-inch barrel drains, which drains are of sufficient size for second, third, fourth, and all the other rates, with the exception of first and eighth rates. The word "EIGHTY" has been altered by your committee to "SIXTY," thus making a nine-inch barrel drain available.

Private Drains.—Page 15, sec. 42. The observation as regards the overseers the same as preceding remark, page 14, sec. 38, line 29.

Scantlings and construction as regards the timbering to Floors, Partitions, Roofs, &c.—Page 16, sec. 43, line 3; s. 44; p. 17; s. 45, line 1; and s. 46, line 26. It is recommended by your committee, that the whole of the clauses regulating the scantlings and bearings of timbers be expunged, as leading to great difficulty, and promoting much litigation; similar clauses were formerly introduced in the 19th Charles 2, cap. 3, and also in an Act of Anne; but in all subsequent acts they were left out, being found impracticable in the carrying out in detail. The scantlings generally are objected to by your committee, and the absurdity of enforcing a girder in every room more than fifteen feet square is so monstrous, that your committee cannot believe that any person of the smallest practical experience can have been consulted in this matter.

Girders and Bressummers.—Page 17, sec. 47, lines 27, 31. The words "girder or" throughout this section have been taken out, leaving the clause to the regulation of the bressummers only, and the words "tailed all" are also taken out, and the words "laid at least half" inserted instead; if this were not altered in this way, it would be a contradiction to subsequent parts of the act.

Heights of External Wall above Gutters.—Page 19, sec. 55, line 27. In this section, the words "six inches" are taken out; a foot above the highest part of the gutter being quite high enough.

Materials of External Walls.—Page 19, sec. 56, line 36. The words *well burnt* are taken out, as good sound place, in proper proportions, have always been found to answer every purpose in all internal brickwork. If place bricks were altogether prohibited, it must create great loss to the brick maker, or a great advance must inevitably be made in the price of stocks.

Depths of Footing below Floors and Areas.—Page 19, sec. 49, line 14. With regard to the top of every footing being 12 inches below the surface of the lowest floor of the building, requires alteration, as it cannot be intended that on every foundation, especially if concreted, or other hard and dry substance, or where it may be required to have the part of the basement floor considerably lower than another, that the top of all the footings should be compelled to be below the lowest floor or area, in which case there would be a very great waste of brickwork without answering any good purpose.

Upon requiring a decision by a Referee.—Page 21, sec. 60, line 32. Instead of the party requiring the reference having to pay the costs therein, and who may be the party aggrieved, it is proposed to strike out the words "requiring such reference," and inserting the words "in error."

Materials of Projections.—Page 22, sec. 61, line 1. Ten feet is considered a sufficient distance to prevent any danger from fire: the word "twenty" has been so altered.

Gathering over and corbelling of Chimney-stacks.—Page 23, sec. 65, lines 18, 19, 21. As corbelling or oversailing both at the fronts and sides of chimney-stacks, if done carefully, has seldom been found to be so objectionable as to call for an entire prohibition, the words "either" and "or sides" have been taken out. The word "fifth" is altered to the "third;" if this were not so altered, it would prevent corbelling for dressing-room chimneys in the bedroom stories, and the word "third" altered to "second."

Materials and Thicknesses of Flues and Chimneys.—Page 23, sec. 66, line 28. The words "eight and a half" inches have been altered by your committee to "four and a quarter," inasmuch as by permitting the intended thickness of eight and a half

To learn about OCR and PDF Compression go to ThePaperlessOffice.org